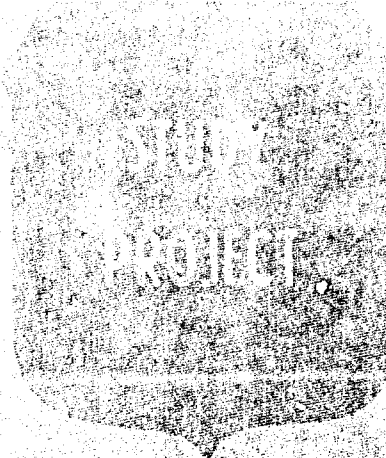


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NEW IDEAS IN THINKING: PERSPECTIVES AND IMPLICATIONS

BY

LEUTENANT COLONEL DANIEL J. COX, JR.

JUN 20 1990

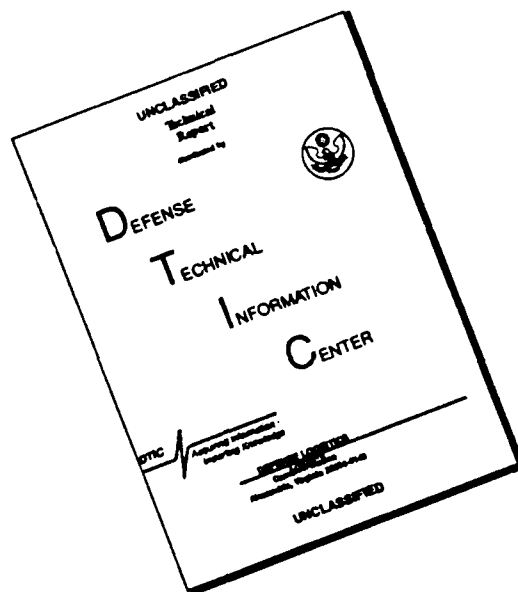
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Domestic perestroika and "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy seem to be at the core of the changes sweeping the communist world and, consequently, the entire system of international relations. As a component of the "new thinking" in foreign policy, the Soviets have espoused a new defensive military doctrine. Western defense analysts hold a wide variety of views as to the true nature of the new doctrine and of its implications for Western security. This paper first reviews the traditional components of Soviet		

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military doctrine and then the basic concepts of the new thinking in military affairs and the emerging new defensive doctrine. Next, the various analytical perspectives, characterized as positive, cynical and skeptical, are examined, along with the implications of each analysis. Finally, the paper concludes with a judgment on the most useful perspective for the policymaker and offers some suggestions for a broad Western response to the new Soviet military doctrine.

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The tumultuous events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the last year, and in a larger sense, over the roughly five years since Mikhail Gorbachev ascended the political pinnacle in the Soviet Union, have shaken the foundations of the forty-five year old international system that sprang from the cataclysm of World War II and was solidified by the bipolar world of the Cold War. The world no longer seems to be as neat and orderly, nor as predictable, as the stable, safe, relatively unchanging, although less democratic, scene of the previous four and one-half decades. Two military superpowers, buttressed by their respective alliances, deterred by overwhelming numbers of nuclear weapons on each side, have lived peacefully -- at least with each other -- during that time frame. Both sides, often condemning the other in stark ideological terms, sometimes reaching out to find common ground to ameliorate the conflict, but always vying at the margins, seemed to be quite comfortable in scrupulously respecting the position and the "rights" of the other in its sphere of influence.

Now, however, the leader of the Eastern superpower is redefining the rules of the game. Domestic perestroika and "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy seem to be at the core of the changes sweeping the communist world and, consequently, the entire system of international relations. Before, Western analysts could feel relatively secure in suggesting policy options for statesmen based upon predictions springing from an understanding of the tenets of Marxism-Leninism and the practical

application of those tenets over the seventy-plus years of the Soviet Union's existence. Today they are not nearly as assured.

Questions abound: To what extent can history serve as a guide to events that appear to be more revolutionary than evolutionary? What is the impact of domestic and foreign "new thinking" on Soviet strategic culture and the apparent move toward a "new" military doctrine? What are the implications for Western security?

This paper will explore those questions and others, and present some thoughts on prospective answers. But, because of the continuing rapidity of change, it will merely suggest the direction in which the Soviets may be heading, and will certainly raise as many questions as it purports to answer.

In the bureaucratic model of politics, parochial priorities and perceptions, among other influences, contribute to a player's stand on a governmental issue.¹ Similarly, basic beliefs on the motives, sincerity, and capacity of the Soviet leadership and the Soviet system to truly change affects an analyst's conclusions of the importance, longevity, and relevance of the Soviet reforms. In the military realm, Western analysts, who relatively recently had reached considerable consensus on most aspects of Soviet military doctrine, with the possible exception of the degree to which the Soviets believe in the utility of nuclear weapons, now are again in disagreement. Understanding the differences in those analyses is critical to a judgment on the implications of the reforms for the West.

SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE

Any analysis of the current trends in Soviet security affairs must be rooted in an understanding of Soviet military doctrine and its primacy as a frame of reference for Soviet leaders. Soviet military doctrine is a statement of the official view of the state, in this case the Communist Party, about the characteristics of modern war and the ways in which it is conducted. The primacy of the political leadership is recognized in the development of military doctrine which consists of two principal aspects, socio-political and military-technical.²

Socio-political deals with the expected nature and characteristics of future war based primarily on an analysis of the external environment. It provides the policy guidance for the preparation for and the conduct of war. It is based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology on war which is Clausewitzian in essence but with a communist twist. War is indeed a continuation of politics by forceful means. But war always has a class nature. In fact, it is the continuation of the politics of the governing class by forceful means. Therefore, by definition, any war engaged in by a socialist state will have just aims, while any war waged by an imperialist state will be unjust.³

The military-technical component encompasses problems of force development (force structure, equipping, and training) and

the direction of military art (the operational control and employment of military forces). Economic factors are recognized as critical to the requirements of defense and are largely dependant on the level of scientific and technological development.⁴

The Soviets see their doctrine as having an historical and transitional aspect. It changes when new political, economic, scientific, or military preparedness factors demand that it do so. It is also constantly adjusted to reflect changes in the doctrine, strategy, or force structure of the potential enemy.⁵

In any attempt to interpret the new Soviet doctrine several factors must be kept in mind: the pre-eminent role of the Communist Party in the formulation of military doctrine, the time-limited and transitional nature of that doctrine, and that it is primarily a guideline for force development during peacetime, giving way to the dictates of strategy at the onset of war.⁶ One must also judge the continued relevance of Marxist-Leninist ideology to the legitimacy of that doctrine.

GORBACHEV'S NEW THINKING ON DEFENSE

Gorbachev came to power with an obvious reform agenda which was primarily economic in nature. His aim was the revitalization of Soviet society to overcome the complacency of the bureaucracy and the labor force, a complacency which limited the development

of accountability, responsibility, and initiative essential to the task of transforming the Soviet Union into a modern, technological state. His method has been to encourage those traits through glasnost, perestroika, and democratization, and by basing rewards on performance rather than position. But, he quickly realized that the embedded defense agenda was a major constraining force to the revitalization of the economy. Not only was the current percentage of resources devoted to defense a concern, but more significantly, the projected amount, based upon the threat assessment and other dictates of the traditional military doctrine, was overwhelming. Concurrently, there was a growing recognition on the part of Gorbachev and the civilian intellectuals who share his vision that the Soviet Union was rapidly becoming an one-dimensional superpower. Military power was its principal attribute, but that military power was now threatened by the growing Western technological predominance. At the same time, Soviet political and economic influence, never the match of its military prowess, was extremely limited and increasingly irrelevant in the international system. Consequently, new thinking in security matters became a necessity.⁷

The allusions to the impending introduction of a new military doctrine for the Soviet Union began with the 27th Party Congress in February 1986. It was unveiled in a communique following the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in May, 1987, and has been expanded upon through a series of subsequent proposals to NATO and in various articles

in the Soviet military literature.³ By now the basic concepts have been articulated:

- War prevention is a fundamental component of Soviet military doctrine;
- No war--including nuclear war--can be considered a rational continuation of politics; and inadvertent paths to nuclear war are as likely, if not more likely, than deliberate paths;
- Political means of enhancing security are more effective than military-technical means;
- Security is mutual: Soviet security cannot be enhanced by increasing other states' insecurity;
- Reasonable sufficiency should be the basis for the future development of the combat capabilities of the Soviet armed forces;
- Soviet military strategy should be based on "defensive" (non-provocative), defense, not offensive capabilities and operations.⁴

ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES

The new thinking on foreign policy and the new defensive doctrine have inspired a new debate among Western defense analysts. Their perspectives can be roughly described as positive, cynical or skeptical. Positivists see a change in the worldview of the new Soviet leadership and believe that Soviet policy is now moving to an even more stabilizing, defensive phase. The extreme cynics see the components of new thinking pertaining to defense as mostly propaganda designed to lull the West into a false sense of security. The more thoughtful cynics tend to

emphasize the historical nature of the Soviet experience, the consistent patterns of Soviet military doctrine, and, while acknowledging some apparent changes, see little difference in the Soviet long-range goals despite apparently different tactics. The skeptics see more interesting changes than do the cynics, but are not necessarily convinced of their stabilizing implications.¹²

THE POSITIVIST PERSPECTIVE

The positivist perspective recognizes the new alliance of Gorbachev and the burgeoning civilian intellectual community as potentially and probably having a major impact on the process and content of Soviet military doctrine. The mellowing of the communist leadership either through generational change or through the gradual transformation of the totalitarian system into a more pluralistic form has allowed the surfacing of the new thinking. The rise of a more technically oriented, managerial class with no personal recollection of the Great Patriotic War and a lower threat mentality has been a significant factor. The wider influence of interest groups concerned about the strain of the defense burden on the national economy has encouraged and strengthened Gorbachev in his restructuring efforts. There is a growing consensus on the need to de-emphasize the military aspect of Soviet power in order to increase the USSR's political and econo-

mic prowess. The recognition that there has to be a radical change in Soviet security priorities has been accompanied by a reduction of the influence of the Soviet military itself vis-a-vis the politicians and civilian analysts.¹¹

The traditional Soviet predilection for offensive action, its preparation masked by maskirovka (camouflage, concealment, and deception), and its execution highlighted by surprise through pre-emptive attack, is a long-standing and well-recognized part of military doctrine.¹² Previously the Soviets have explained this away by insisting that their doctrine was defensive at the socio-political level while offensive on the military-technical plane.¹³ The positivist perspective on the large Soviet conventional force build-up and the emergence of the offensive conventional option in the 1960's looks to the preferences and power of the professional military during the Brezhnev era. The military began to argue for a conventional option in 1963 in opposition to Khrushchev's push for huge conventional structure cuts. In part, it was to justify their positions in Soviet society through a large, diversified, modernized military establishment. Brezhnev, mindful of the fate of his predecessor when he alienated such strong institutional forces, sought to accommodate the military's desires by supporting and resourcing their offensive predilection.¹⁴

Gorbachev came to power with no strong ties to the military and his ascension through the ranks to General Secretary was at a time during which party-military relations were becoming strain-

ed. Before his death Brezhnev had attempted to slow the rate of growth of military spending by pegging it to that of the economy as a whole. With his passing, the military, led by Marshal Ogarkov, continued to press for greater defense spending. Primarily because of his willingness to challenge the civilian leadership publicly on the issue, Ogarkov was dismissed as Chief of the General Staff in September, 1984. Military influence was further curtailed two months later when Ustinov died and his successor as Minister of Defense, Marshal Sokolov, was denied full membership on the Politburo.¹⁵

Three previous events had conspired to exacerbate the party-military tension and probably contributed to Gorbachev's general attitude toward the military and defense issues. The deployment of the intermediate-range SS-20 missile at the military's urging in 1976-77 for largely military-technical reasons actually lessened Soviet security when the West responded with the deployment of the Pershing II and cruise missiles. That miscalculation served as an example of the dangers of allowing purely military-technical considerations to drive policy and take precedence over broader political objectives. Likewise, the Afghanistan invasion in 1979 and the downing of the Korean airliner in 1983 further tarnished the military's image by incurring large political costs for the USSR.¹⁶

As previously discussed, Gorbachev's reforms include and actually require a harnessing of the vested interests in both the industrial and military bureaucracies. He is seeking to alter

the Soviet process of national security policy-making and has moved to take back the defense agenda-setting function from the military bureaucracy.¹⁷ He has continued to exclude the military from full membership in the Politburo and has moved fairly quickly to make some important changes in the top ranks. He has replaced ten of the sixteen deputy defense ministers, the chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces, the commanders of the groups of forces in Germany, Hungary and Poland, and of two important military districts. When Mathias Rust landed his Cessna on Red Square in 1987 Gorbachev used the opportunity to dismiss the head of the Soviet Air Defense Forces and retire Defense Minister Sokolov, who had hinted that the military was exempt from perestroika, in favor of General Yazov, who was chosen over 50 more senior officers.¹⁸

As Gorbachev has continued the process of replacing the old line officers with ones more amenable to his new thinking, the military's influence on arms control and security policy has decreased in proportion to the increase in the influence of the Foreign Ministry and the International Department of the Central Committee. The strengthening of expertise in those departments has ensured that non-military views are institutionalized into the policy process and provides another and independent source of information on security matters for Gorbachev's consideration. Likewise, the role of scientists and outside experts from various think tanks has increased and adds more competing assessments to further reduce the military's ability to dominate the formulation

of security policy.¹¹ As this process continues, the more likely it is that new thinking will define the Soviet approach in foreign relations and military affairs, with the result being a more positive and less threatening Soviet orientation toward the rest of the world.

THE CYNICAL PERSPECTIVE

To the more extreme cynics, the Soviet brand of new thinking is simply a political campaign to counter the NATO military buildup and buy time to revitalize the Soviet economy before embarking on yet another phase in the struggle with the West. They believe that the Soviet system will remain securely authoritarian for the foreseeable future and that the Soviet primary goal continues to be the political and military domination of Europe. They do not believe that the Gorbachev reforms, even if sincere, can survive the Soviet system any better than did Khrushchev's.¹²

In the more extreme form this perspective rejects the Soviet claim that the new military doctrine is an expression of new political thinking. Rather, the Soviet military doctrine is still based on classic Leninist ideology, predicting the inevitable triumph of the socialist system but only through continued struggle with the aggressive capitalist states. By nature, capitalism must seek to destroy socialism. War is the conse-

quence of Western imperialism which "has endeavored, and will endeavor, to seek social revenge ...(and) to eliminate socialism as a social system."²¹ The cynic is mindful of the unique Leninist claim that it is scientifically impossible for the USSR to launch an aggressive war. Therefore, Soviet military doctrine claims a purely defensive purpose since all military actions, including offensive, are aimed at repulsing imperialist aggression. Accordingly, Soviet leaders and military theorists continue to believe that a fundamental class conflict continues to differentiate the East from the West, that capitalism retains its aggressive intent, and that the socialist USSR must continue to prepare to "defend" itself from the implacable enemy.²²

The irreconcilability of the ideological and political struggle with the capitalist camp can be expected to remain the cornerstone of Soviet doctrine....From a military viewpoint, this means that no form of detente, negotiated settlement, or new version of peaceful coexistence will bring Soviet acceptance of the post-WWII international order. Therefore, Soviet policy will remain inexorably committed to altering that order, avoiding war if possible, while nonetheless preparing for it.²³

The West must remember, then, that the "new" military doctrine is not new with respect to its fundamental Leninist premises which are unchanged from the doctrine that preceded it.

The more thoughtful cynics look to Soviet history to provide clues to the meaning and implication of the current "new" thinking in military affairs. They identify previous periods of "long cycles"²⁴ or "revolutions in military affairs"²⁵ which highlight the transitional nature of Soviet military doctrine and which

fostered profound changes in Soviet force structure and operational art. One conclusion is that "a longer view of history cautions that what we are witnessing is neither accommodation nor decline, but rather the evolution of a new Soviet national security policy intended to make the USSR a more effective competitor in the next century."²⁶

The long cycles are defined by a process that the Soviets describe as an orderly and scientific analysis of new objective realities in technological, political and economic realms. The analysis of those trends is followed by a process of adjusting doctrine to account for the new realities. In the past, the molding of the new doctrine has itself been greatly politicized by ongoing leadership struggles. However, after consensus on the new doctrine is finally achieved, force structure changes are programmed, including cuts, if required to concentrate on building the economy for the development of the new technologies. Concurrently, the military adjusts the precepts of operational art and tactics.

This recurring pattern is seen throughout the cycles identified to date. Soviet political and military leaders have first recognized that military capabilities are limited by the objective realities for various reasons. Principally, while new technologies are beginning to change the nature of modern weaponry, the labor pool is considered to be too unsophisticated in a technical-cultural sense for the new conditions and the industrial base is incapable of producing the new technologies in either

the quality or quantity required. A debate then ensues within the framework of the basic Marxist-Leninist tenets to define the nature of the future war in light of the new technologies. In the past this has often been accompanied by a political power struggle in which the vying factions attempted to use the controversy to consolidate their positions or eliminate an opposing group or individual. The new assumptions and requirements uncovered by the debate affect all aspects of social, economic and political life. Once the debate concludes with an officially promulgated military doctrine, the military planners develop the industrial, social and personnel policies to support the required force structure. While ideological propositions are the cornerstone of the process, the next most important consideration is the impact of the emerging technologies, followed then by an evaluation of the Western threat, rather than the latter first as sometimes suspected.²⁷

The first long cycle or military revolution extended from the late 1920's to the end of the 1940's. Given the weakness of the young regime following World War I and the civil war, and in light of the hostility of the West, Lenin conceived a strategy for avoiding war through "peaceful coexistence", that is, continuing the international class struggle through means other than direct military conflict. The objective was to maintain relations with the advanced industrialized states so as to reap the benefits of economic interaction, while industrializing the USSR in order to build a military force capable of prevailing in the

inevitable war with capitalism. Concomitant with that policy decision, the process described above was underway, assessing the implications of the new technologies of the time -- aviation, mechanization, and chemical weapons -- on future war. The debate was acrimonious, being tied to the power struggle between Trotsky and Stalin. At the conclusion, the resultant doctrine, proclaimed by Frunze, was put into effect. Foreseeing the requirement for a force structure and operational doctrine to exploit the new technologies, a period of risk was necessary in which the existing forces were reduced significantly to devote resources to the development of the industrial capacity to produce the new technologies. A concerted effort was also made to raise the literacy level of the officer corps to employ the new weapons. By the mid-30's newly created armored, airborne and aviation forces were being deployed to execute the new doctrine for deep operations.²³

The second military revolution began in the late 1940's with the USSR in an analogous situation to the 1920's: an economy destroyed by war, a massive army, a technologically backward manpower pool, and the emergence of new technologies which changed the objective realities. Nuclear weapons, long-range delivery systems -- particularly ballistic missiles -- and cybernetics prompted the process of once again redefining the nature of future war. Again, the size of the army was cut and resources were devoted to rebuilding the economy, with the military accorded the highest priority. The military education system was also again upgraded. The early stage of the doctrinal debate was

accompanied by a leadership struggle reminiscent of the one during the first long cycle. Khrushchev advocated more armaments and heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods. Malenkov sought to concentrate military power in long-range nuclear delivery systems to free up resources for consumer products. Khrushchev prevailed and promptly instituted his rival's program -- increases in Strategic Rocket Forces and reductions in conventional forces -- except for the consumer aspect. The secret debates that formulated the new military doctrine were synthesized, much as Frunze had in the earlier period, and published by Marshal Sokolovskiy in his 1962 book, Military Strategy. The doctrine reflected a pragmatic effort to master the new weapons and design forces and methods of employment to exploit their capabilities at all levels of operations. The requirement to disperse forces led to the concept of echelonment. The solution of massing for a breakthrough attack without presenting a tempting nuclear target was found in a high rate of speed that rapidly accumulated forces at the intended point. Again, as in the earlier period, doctrine preceded the force development process. By the mid-70's, however, the Soviets had an impressive inventory of force structure capabilities to implement the doctrine.²³

A third military revolution appears to be in progress today, first noted by Soviet military theorists in the late 1970's. Again, emerging technologies are changing the face of future war and forcing another long cycle in Soviet doctrinal transition and force structure adjustments. Now the technologies are advanced

microelectronics, which permit non-nuclear weapons with greatly enhanced accuracies and distributed command and control systems, directed energy systems, and genetic engineering. In 1981 Marshal Ogarkov, then Chief of the Soviet General Staff, admonished military planners that operational art was falling behind the combat potential of the new technologies.³⁰ By the mid-80's he and other theorists were questioning the feasibility of their nuclear-oriented strategy and force posture given the corresponding size of the NATO strategic arsenal.³¹ They began to recognize that the introduction of the new technologies could radically change conventional combat with respect to geographic scope, speed of action and scale of destructiveness.³²

Ogarkov clearly set out the tasks for a revision of doctrine and force structure. The focal point of doctrinal revision is the theater strategic operation, which calls for attacks on multiple fronts of much greater width, to a substantially greater depth, and at a much faster speed than previously envisioned. The doctrine is designed to exploit the capabilities of the new technologies that theoretically permit command and control, and accurate, non-nuclear fire support for operations of that scale and tempo.³³

The dilemma for the Soviets is likewise similar to the previous cycles -- whether the scientific and technological base can support the exploitation of the new technologies for military applications. In the past the Soviets have been relatively successful in acquiring those technologies that they have been

unable to develop through purchase or espionage from the West. These new technologies, however, would appear to require extensive access to Western economies and research and development communities to allow the Soviets to amass the experience in mass production techniques to achieve an indigenous production capacity.³⁴

While maintenance of a credible military capability is fundamental to Soviet policy, and defense usually takes precedence over other requirements, the previous cycles provide historical precedence for a "breathing spell" that shifts resources to the long-term improvement in industry. The resultant short-term decrease in military procurement rates is accepted in expectation of dramatical increases in modernization and weapons sophistication. Even if this period would seem to require an even longer time period than before, history would suggest the same tactics as before: arms control negotiations to slow or halt Western acquisition of the emerging technologies and a propaganda campaign to influence world, and especially NATO, public opinion.³⁵

The Soviet military is now claiming a political mandate for the qualitative modernization of its forces in an attempt to leapfrog the West with weapons based upon the new technologies. The goal..."approved at the 19th All-Union Party Conference in 1988, is to bypass the evolutionary process to armaments development and to seek qualitative leaps in capability".³⁶ The "new thinking" and the "new defensive doctrine" complement the re-

adjustments of the new long cycle. A reduction in the NATO threat through arms control agreements or through the "peace dividend" budget cuts of the West's current euphoria provide the needed breathing space as well as limit the quantity of modernized forces ultimately needed to achieve qualitative advantage.

In sum, the evolving Soviet national security policy, while perhaps muting the ideological tone, still sees the protection and advancement of Soviet socialism as its central goal. It is responding to the new objective realities and the opportunities suggested by them. As such, it is signalling a new phase in the global struggle.

THE SKEPTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The skeptical perspective lies between that of the positivist and that of the cynic. It realizes the existence of cycles in the development of Soviet military doctrine and force structure and the central role technology plays in those military revolutions. It also recognizes the rise of the institutchiki and their growing influence on national security policy as noted by the positivists.³⁷ New political thinking has had an impact as evidenced by a greater willingness to accept radical changes in the East European political systems and in their security arrangements with the Soviet Union. However, the implications are not nearly so clear as the positivists or the cynics would

ingly. Doctrine is definitely in a transitional stage. But the final form is unclear because the policy debate is very much alive within the ranks of the civilian and military leadership.

There is both convergence and disagreement between the civilian and military camps in all aspects of the emerging doctrine. Both agree on the revolutionary nature of the emerging technologies on military affairs and both are willing to shift the focus of the competition with the West away from the military and toward the political realm.³³ There is also general agreement that restructuring is a natural security imperative, but they differ on the objectives of that restructuring primarily because of their differing motives. The civilian leadership and academicians stress the economic and political benefits of restructuring the economy because they see an opportunity to permanently alter the relationship between the military and political means of providing security.³³ The military see the move to a more political approach as an expedient way to gain the needed time for the economic restructuring to advance the technological basis of Soviet forces. In fact, many high ranking military officers, including even the Gorbachev appointees, have severe reservations with respect to particular points of the new doctrine as espoused by the civilians. It is they, and not the civilians, who control most of the detailed information on Soviet and foreign military forces needed to formulate effective policy.⁴⁰ Even so, the military does not have the political power to independently challenge the new political thinking on security.⁴¹

The civilian leadership is in control, and the Soviet military recognizes the prerogatives of the Party in the socio-political aspect of doctrine revision. However, the areas of convergence or disagreement do affect the extent to which the new thinking will be reflected in future policy.

Even while supporting "wars of national liberation" in the Third World, war prevention has always been the de facto policy of the Soviet Union with respect to the USSR itself. Yet, even after Khrushchev reversed the ideological position that war with capitalism was inevitable, in fact, that was never formally recognized in military doctrine, which remained focused on war fighting. Gorbachev's new military doctrine now explicitly states war prevention as the fundamental goal, and he personally reaffirmed that the party does not consider nuclear war to be inevitable. It is a position that is generally non-controversial and primarily serves to affirm the ideological correctness of the goal of war prevention. It does help to raise the importance of political considerations vis-a-vis the military-technical and consequently gives weight to arms control and other stabilizing efforts as legitimate pursuits.⁴²

The roots of the new thinking on nuclear war go back to Brezhnev's 1977 Tula speech (known in the West as the "Tula line") where he stated the Soviet position that a nuclear war was unwinnable and that the USSR was seeking only parity, not superiority in both conventional and nuclear arms.⁴³ The new thinking goes further, postulating that the West too shares that convic-

tion, and sees a greater danger in the threat of accidental nuclear war now that both sides clearly reject deliberate war as irrational. Consequently, by downplaying the threat of deliberate attack while raising the concern of inadvertent nuclear war, the new thinking sets the ideological context for the lessening of the role of military power in general, and specifically accepts the desirability of strategic force parity at lower levels.⁴⁴

There are dissenting views that the West still sees war in the Clausewitzian sense and that the threat of deliberate attack is real, with the implication that a unilateral reduction will encourage Western aggression. However, the political position matches the military-technical conclusions reached by Ogarkov in the early 80's with respect to the doubtful continued utility of nuclear weapons. These conclusions may have been reinforced by the Chernobyl experience.⁴⁵ At any rate, the military had already moved to downgrade the emphasis on nuclear relative to conventional combat even prior to the new political thinking.⁴⁶ Even if they disagree, the absence of any strong military opposition to the concept that accidental nuclear war is now the predominant threat, will allow Gorbachev to continue to use the concept to justify a move toward lower nuclear force levels.

The new thinking on war prevention and the concern over accidental war leads naturally to the emphasis on political means over military as the way to enhance Soviet security. Given the destructiveness of not only nuclear arms, but also the emerging conventional weaponry, and given the concerns of the leadership

in the USSR's ability to compete with the West in the coming technological race, reducing the threat through political means accomplishes more than attempting to counter it through military means. The military has expressed concern, pointing to indications that NATO does not share that view of the primacy of political means in enhancing security and remains committed to achieving military superiority over the USSR. Defense Minister Yazov, a Gorbachev protege, has himself led in voicing such concerns. Marshal Akhromeyev, until recently Chief of the General Staff and now a special advisor to President Gorbachev, and an early supporter of the concept, has now cautioned that military-technical considerations are at least as important as political. However, as discussed earlier, there is also a measure of convergence of views and support for the shift toward political means between civilians and the military, even if for different reasons. If such means can constrain US strategic defense initiative (SDI) efforts and buy time for the improvement of Soviet conventional capabilities, then both sides can find utility in the concept. The use of political means to divide and weaken NATO politically also supports a Soviet long-held goal and provides more common ground for the concept."

The claim that security is mutual, that the USSR's security cannot be assured by threatening another state's security, is related to the new predilection for political means, but is more radical because it is so out of synch with previous Soviet actions. The same considerations relative to the consequences of

nuclear war lead to the conclusion that national and international security are connected. Such a proposition also requires a move toward political means, with a consideration for how the proposed action affects another's threat perception, and implies a greater willingness to make concessions. Again, the counter-argument is that NATO does not share that view and continues to build for superiority. The differences in the internal debate focus primarily on ideological grounds. Critics fall back on the Marxist-Leninist thought that whether the society is capitalist or socialist determines whether it is a threat, not its force posture. Consequently, the USSR, as a classless socialist society, cannot be perceived to be a threat. The relevance of the concept seems to be tied to the political will of the current leadership and could very well disappear with that leadership.⁴³

The idea of "reasonable sufficiency" is rather enigmatic precisely because the Soviets hold widely divergent views as to the meaning. Some see it as a shift away from the past where Soviet force structure and deployment were products of a reaction to NATO's actions. Now, Soviet weapons programs will be based purely on self-determined objectives, presumably at lower levels. Others hold a completely opposite view: whereas in the past weapons development proceeded on internally set requirements, now it will be based solely on strict reaction to Western deployment. Another conceptualization looks to sufficiency in the political, military and economic dimensions of power. Reasonable sufficiency connotes a priority on the political means of enhancing secur-

199, a military capability to defend against the worst case threat scenario but not enough to threaten others, and a recognition of the marginal utility of ever increasing weapons procurement versus economic costs.⁴⁹

Soviet attempts to tie policy to reasonable sufficiency result in even more confusion. Some proponents, concerned that the West has purposely maneuvered the USSR into an arms race in order to destroy the economy,⁵⁰ have argued for asymmetrical responses which maintain parity of capabilities rather than parity in like weapons systems as a means of defeating that tactic. Others have even proposed deep unilateral Soviet force reductions; but most new thinkers support large strategic force reductions only after negotiations. The critics of new thinking emphasize the importance of keeping a redundancy of weaponry and maintaining strict parity in the strategic arena. In the conventional arena they reject the notion that perestroika applies to force structure questions, but rather that it applies solely to training and work habits. In their view, unilateral restructuring should only be done to improve force posture, not reduce force capabilities.⁵¹

The common ground supported by the diverse opinions on reasonable sufficiency is an intention to maintain strategic nuclear parity, although differences between the camps become more pronounced as to the size of the appropriate reductions. Additionally, both sides seem prepared to accept lower levels of conventional forces and in so doing also reduce asymmetries

between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. For the traditionalists that implies the reduction of NATO advantages; hence the Soviet persistence in demanding the inclusion of naval forces in Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) negotiations. But for the most part, reasonable sufficiency will probably remain a vague concept in an operational sense because it serves a greater political purpose for Gorbachev that way. He then has more maneuver room to use the concept to justify a particular weapon or force decision in any manner that supports his current needs.⁵²

The concept of "defensive" defense is the most controversial aspect of the new military doctrine because it flies in the face of the long-time Soviet belief in the primacy of the offensive and because with it the civilian new thinkers have crossed into the realm of strategy, the formerly exclusive preserve of the military officers. The new thinking on defense proposes a force posture and military strategy designed to repel an attack, but incapable of a surprise, pre-emptive offensive outside of the Soviet borders. Proponents believe this can be achieved by replacing offensive weapons with defensive weapons. Such a strategy, along with the concept of reasonable sufficiency, implies a possibility of significant conventional force reductions accompanied by an extremely low force presence in Eastern Europe.⁵³

As expected, the military officers have reacted strongly to the perceived assault on their prerogative. Once again they are led by Gorbachev's appointee, Yazov. They oppose the concept on

several grounds. First, whether a weapon is offensive or defensive depends upon how it is employed, not its characteristics. Secondly, while defensive operations have a place, history has proven the inferiority of a purely defensive strategy. The enemy must ultimately be destroyed through offensive action undertaken as soon as possible after the required defensive operation. Finally, in accordance with ideology, the traditional offensive strategy is really a defensive doctrine because, by definition, a socialist state cannot be threatening; any actions taken are in defense of socialism.⁵⁴

Even so, there has been increased attention to the defense in recent Soviet military literature and training. Until two years ago Soviet training patterns continued to emphasize offensive operations.⁵⁵ In the last two years, however, Warsaw Pact exercises have taken on a distinctly defensive flavor, with a defensive phase lasting approximately three weeks before a counter offensive is launched.⁵⁶ Marshal Akhromeyev has publicly stated that the doctrine means that the USSR will initially remain on the defensive for about 20 days, while Soviet diplomats attempt to negotiate a peace prior to the launching of a counter offensive.⁵⁷ In fact, the military's greater interest in defense predates Gorbachev's new thinking. They began to realize that the defense had been neglected in Soviet doctrine and the emphasis on an almost purely offensive orientation was based upon increasingly questionable assumptions: that the USSR would have enough warning time and the political leadership would make a

timely decision to allow the launching of a pre-emptive offensive, and that the war would be fought on NATO territory because NATO would not have the forces and will to fight the war on Pact territory. US concepts on Airland Battle and Follow-on Forces Attack threatened their second-echelon forces and put their doctrine at risk.⁵⁰ Whereas the new thinkers are postulating a non-provocative defensive strategy, the military sees defensive operations as becoming more important, but still a temporary component of an offensively oriented strategy. The military's near monopoly of information and expertise on conventional forces means that any restructuring or cutting of those forces will most probably be within the military's framework for a more balanced theater strategy and not the new thinking on a less threatening force posture.⁵¹

Overall, the aspects of the new military doctrine most likely to continue are those that are least controversial, primarily because they conform to established trends in a transitional doctrine. Notions of preventing war, with particular attention to the danger of inadvertent nuclear war; and of the acceptance of the concept of sufficiency in strategic and theater nuclear weapons fall in this category. The others, the mutuality of security, the dominance of political over military-technical means in assuring security, reasonable sufficiency in conventional forces, and defensive defense, are more problematical. Those concepts represent significant departures from past doctrine and are tied more to the durability of the present leadership in

Moscow.

Accordingly, the Soviets can be expected to seek to conclude a strategic arms reduction agreement with the US which substantially reduces the level of strategic forces, while maintaining the current approximate quantitative parity. Contrary to Gorbachev's public rhetoric advocating complete denuclearization, there is little support for such a notion within the Soviet national security establishment. Also, there is insufficient support for a unilateral reduction in nuclear weapons outside of the negotiation process. The test for new thinking in this context is the extent to which the Soviets agree to an asymmetrical reduction in their strong counter-force capability.⁵²

With respect to theater nuclear forces, the Soviets are in favor of complete denuclearization, providing it is of a mutual nature. Although initially slow to recognize the contribution, from their perspective, of the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) to the potential invalidation of Western deterrence policy, they were quick to catch on. The INF Treaty could encourage further European demands for removal of all theater nuclear weapons, as well as enhance their new operational doctrine that calls for the destruction of NATO nuclear-capable systems by conventional means during the early stages of a conflict.⁵³ The elimination of theater nuclear weapons would also help substantially to decouple the U.S. from Europe by removing the most credible aspect of the deterrent.

The Soviets are highly unlikely to undertake any additional

unilateral reductions in conventional forces in lieu of negotiated limits under the CFE process. They will continue to claim that their new doctrine is strictly defensive and call for both alliances to eliminate existing asymmetries in "offensive" weapons systems as well as restructuring of forces to preclude the capabilities of surprise attack or offensive operations. But what used to be called "force modernization" is now called "unilateral restructuring". The implications are that the Soviets are indeed intending to move in the direction of quality over quantity. One will see changes in theater force posture that will reflect the increased interest in defense, but such changes will not be at the expense of offensive capabilities.⁶¹

Irrespective of the final form of the doctrine and the resultant force structure, the perennial Soviet objectives may ultimately be served. For many years the Soviets have sought to acquire a dominant position in Europe through a combination of political and military means. To the extent that the new political thinking and the new military doctrine accomplish those objectives the Soviet Union will be well served, but the result will not necessarily be a more stable situation in central Europe. The Soviets can be expected to continue to seek to destroy Western unity by decoupling Western Germany from NATO, and particularly from the US nuclear umbrella, while achieving a substantially demilitarized central Europe without a US force presence -- a central Europe which looks primarily east for economic markets and political leadership. "Gorbachev's much more subtle

and flexible approach to foreign and defense policy continues to serve these traditional objectives admirably."⁶³

CONCLUSIONS

Given the rapidity of change in the USSR it is virtually impossible to make a reasoned judgment on which perspective is the most correct. Only time will provide the answer, and one can be sure that the ultimate outcome and the forces contributing to that outcome will provide a hearty grist for the historians' mill. But the Western policy maker certainly cannot wait for time to reveal all, and must in fact make that reasoned judgment on which perspective provides the best guidance.

The pure cynical perspective does not take note of the truly revolutionary changes in motion in the USSR and in the Warsaw Pact countries in general. Even the more thoughtful cynic must admit that, while the long cycles that describe the revolutions in military affairs provide historical perspective, the socio-political aspect of doctrine has certainly increased in importance, with significant implications. To merely view the current changes as another Soviet breathing space before embarking on the next phase of the East-West struggle condemns the West to a policy of reaction. It also eschews a possible opportunity to encourage fundamental and lasting change in the Soviet system.

The potential pitfall in the positivist perspective is its

over-reliance on a long-term commitment of the Soviet leadership to revised thinking on the nature of competition with the West, and its trust in the durability of the changes in the decision-making environment in the USSR. Gorbachev's continued success in furthering and institutionalizing his new thinking and the new defensive doctrine depends on several factors, the not least of which is his continued ability to place and promote his own supporters. Secondly, the success of economic reform is critical to the support of those in the military who see that reform as vital to the maintenance of military strength and are willing to accept constrained defense spending in return. Increased instability in Eastern Europe could play into the hands of those fearful of Soviet troop reductions there. Most significantly, failure of his arms control proposals would probably strengthen military demands for more resources for defense and jeopardize the future of perestroika and new thinking.

The more useful perspective for the policymaker is that of the skeptic. It is cautious in its analysis, yet considerate of possibilities for positive changes in the East-West strategic relationship.

Since the major differences between the new thinkers and the traditionalists with respect to the new military doctrine rest primarily in divergent perceptions of the threat posed by NATO, Western reactions, in particular that of the US, will play a large role in the long term impact of new thinking. The skeptical perspective sees no reason to believe that future General

Secretaries or Politburo members will naturally be new thinkers. In fact, as the cynic would remind us, the new defensive doctrine and the entire reform initiative could be used in a future leadership struggle to discredit Gorbachev as was done in the Stalin-Trotsky, Khrushchev-Malenkov and Brezhnev-Khrushchev fights for power. To ensure the durability of new thinking, Gorbachev must institutionalize it in the Soviet national security decision-making structure. That will require time, a commodity of which he may not have enough. The US must do what it can to support Gorbachev and his reforms, but only within the construct of a realistic appraisal of what is in the interest of Western security.

It is a realistic assessment that the Soviet Union is serious about seeking to prevent war and is willing to enter into substantive arms reduction agreements. However, the skeptical perspective recognizes that Soviet arms control diplomacy plays a central role in a concerted attempt to change Western perceptions of the Soviet threat and thereby weaken Western collective defense efforts. We already see European opposition mounting to the successor to the Lance short-range nuclear missile. A denuclearized European theater will remove the most credible component of the deterrence policy, effectively decoupling the US nuclear umbrella from NATO. The US and NATO at large must ensure that arms control agreements do not weaken the basis of collective defense and must make a serious effort to educate the Western publics on the rationale for their positions on security issues.

Similarly, the Soviet adoption of a "non-offensive" military doctrine reinforces the same Western public proclivity to perceive the USSR as less of a threat than in the past. While this may in fact be the case in the future, the jury is still out, particularly with respect to conventional force structure and strategy. The evolution of operational concepts will prove the ultimate acceptance or rejection of the new doctrine. Understanding how the Soviets intend to implement their new doctrine is also vital to understanding Soviet positions in CFE and for developing a coordinated Western response, as well as for Western efforts to redesign a NATO defensive doctrine and structure.

Encouraging the Soviets to shift the priority of the competition away from military power and into the economic arena would seem to be in the West's interest. The Soviet military's apparent decision to move to an emphasis on quality of weaponry over quantity should also have short-term benefits for the West. It is difficult to imagine the USSR, on its own accord, matching Western capabilities in the emerging technologies. However, the Soviets expect, and probably will get, considerable Western help in that effort. Over the long haul NATO, and again particularly the US, must continue to restrict Soviet access to militarily significant technology as well as continuing its own research and development and force modernization. Unfortunately, the current peace euphoria is already prompting calls for the relaxation of export controls and the reduction or cancellation of R&D projects.

Above all else, the U.S. must seek to maintain a military position in Europe and resist continuing Soviet efforts to thwart it. It is primarily a continuing military presence that will allow the US to maintain influence over events and help move the process in a direction that supports U.S. national security interests.

ENDNOTES

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